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MUNICIPAL REFORM IN PHILADELPHIA

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ADVANCED SYSTEM OF CITY GOVERNMENT PROVIDED BY NEW CHARTER

With Introductory Summary by
SENATOR BOIES PENROSE

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
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THE MOST important event in American municipal history since the adoption of the present frame of government for New York City is the new charter of Philadelphia.
—New York "Evening Post."

ON JUNE 25, 1919, Governor William C. Sproul, of Pennsylvania, affixed his signature to a revised municipal charter for the City of Philadelphia, and to a series of bills reforming the election laws to give the citizens of Philadelphia opportunity for making the new charter effective. These bills were passed after a struggle of several months in the Legislature, waged by the Citizens' Charter Committee of Philadelphia. The new laws have been characterized by experts in municipal legislation as the most advanced step that has yet been taken affecting the government and administrative efficiency of cities of large size in the United States.

ANALYSIS OF PHILADELPHIA'S NEW CHARTER AND REFORM LAWS

By

BOIES PENROSE

PROBLEMS of municipal government are second to none in importance in public affairs in the United States. Tremendous increases in urban populations since the Civil War period, and especially during the past two or three decades which have witnessed remarkable industrial development throughout the country, have brought questions of municipal administration acutely to the fore.

It may well be doubted whether any formula of municipal organization and administration has yet been found which would successfully apply to all cities in general. Local conditions and populations differ widely in different sections, and there is great divergence even among cities existing under the same State rule. Ready-made garments for American municipalities have not yet been devised; of necessity the cloth must be cut to fit each particular case.

CITIES SHOULD BE DIVORCED FROM PARTISAN POLITICS

NEVERTHELESS, one general principle is clearly establishing itself; that municipal government increases in efficiency in the exact ratio in which it is divorced from partisan politics. In this connection I might state that in my judgment party efficiency and capacity for general public service increases in the ratio in which it disentangles itself from municipal politics. For instance, party principles are not even a secondary consideration with the Democratic Tammany machine in New York or the Republican contractors' machine in Philadelphia. Each of them exists solely to promote selfish interests, and each of them is an incubus and a liability to the party with which it is aligned.

No system of municipal government which strives for administrative efficiency—commission

rule, city-business management or any of the forms which run the gamut from experiment to success—can function properly or completely along party lines. Non-partisan nomination and election of municipal officers, and their responsibility direct to the people without the confusing intervention of the party titles of national or State political organizations, is an essential for efficiency in city administration. It is an absurdity to mix protection or free trade with highway paving or garbage disposal; to associate the League of Nations or the Monroe Doctrine with trolley fares or street cleaning.

Evolution is better than revolution, however, which explains, and to many minds still justifies, the lingering hold which party politics retains upon many, even a large majority, of American municipalities. At least it explains what is the principal shortcoming of the new municipal charter which the Legislature of Pennsylvania has given to Philadelphia. This instrument falls short in that it does not definitely and at once cut away the incubus of partisan nomination, election and responsibility for municipal rule—which ultimately must follow if Philadelphia is to enjoy the full benefits of efficient self-government.

But nevertheless Philadelphia, most conservative, most glorious and most American of American cities, has in its new charter an instrument and opportunity for advancement such as has never been presented in its municipal history. Given a full and free expression of public will at the polls, it will take a tremendous forward step among its sister cities, and forever repudiate the brand of "corrupt and contented."

NON-PARTISAN CITIZENS' COMMITTEE FRAMED NEW LAWS

WITH the framing of the charter I had absolutely nothing to do. It was the work of a committee of public-spirited citizens who had devoted unselfish study and attention to the subject of municipal reform for many years. With their objects and purposes I was in entire and hearty sympathy and gave my unreserved pledge to aid the passage of the legislation they projected, to the best of my ability. To avoid even the appearance of partisan or factional interest, I refrained from making any suggestions as to policy or form of the proposed legislation, believing that both should be left absolutely to the judgment and decision

of the citizens' committee having the new charter project in charge.

The charter committee took the Bullitt bill, under which Philadelphia has been governed for 32 years, as the basis for the new charter. The cardinal and outstanding feature of the Bullitt bill, hailed in its day as a wonderful piece of reform legislation, was the concentration of municipal authority in the hands of the Mayor. From the consolidation act of 1854, which merged in one city government a large number of districts and boroughs that had previously held independent existence within the county boundaries, down to the passage of the Bullitt bill, the city suffered greatly from the loose, heterogeneous and unco-ordinated system that was inherited from pre-consolidation days.

Concentration of virtually all power and responsibility in the Mayor, under the Bullitt bill, was the opposite swing of the pendulum. Arbitrary political misuse of the Mayor's powers gave rise to the contractor oligarchies which have been in the saddle virtually ever since the Bullitt charter went into effect. The contractors became more powerful than the source from which they drew their strength. Corrupt or go-along Mayors became political puppets in their hands; reform or personally-independent Mayors have been impotent to make headway against them.

WIDE SCOPE OF MUNICIPAL REFORMS IN NEW LAW

THE NEW charter, while adhering to the fundamental theory of the "responsibility" of the Mayor, devises a system of checks and balances to overcome the abuses heretofore lodged in the municipal system. Most important is the substitution of a single-chambered City Council of 21 members for the unwieldy two-chambered Select and Common Councils of 145 members—cumbrous bodies heretofore entirely under contractor control.

Strict civil service provisions to remove police and firemen from politics; inauguration of a business-like budget system for city finances; authorization for the city to do its own street cleaning, garbage collection and other public works, which have heretofore been sources of contract favoritism, corruption and scandal; and numerous other provisions to cover weak and dangerous spots in the present city charter, are embodied in the new piece of legislation. He

framers and sponsors may take justifiable pride in producing one of the most important and comprehensive municipal charter laws ever enacted in this country.

But, as Governor Sproul has well said, a charter direct from Heaven would not help Philadelphia or any other city unless the citizens perform their duties of electing the right kind of men to public office, and of exercising the right kind of public influence and interest in their own affairs.. To make it possible for the citizens of Philadelphia to exercise such an influence, and to give them an opportunity to make the new charter effective, the Legislature has passed a group of reform bills dealing with election matters which are, in my judgment, almost equal to the charter itself in importance.

Chief among these is the amended personal registration bill, designed to give full and fair expression to the will of the voters in the elections. Like nearly every other agency of municipal government in Philadelphia, the legal machinery of registration of voters has been seized by the contractors and made an instrument to thwart and throttle fair elections—defeating the very spirit and purpose of the personal registration law.

EFFECTIVENESS OF REFORMS DEPENDS UPON VIGILANCE OF CITIZENS

IT HAS been my observation in public affairs that many laws, sincerely designed and ardently urged for the betterment of conditions have been, as was the case with the personal registration law in its application to Philadelphia, converted into engines of oppression and fraud upon the public interest. While this fact is not at all an argument against remedial and corrective legislation of this character, it at least illustrates the necessity of care and farsightedness in the framing of such laws, and public discrimination in the selection of agents to enforce them.

Philadelphia would have overwhelmingly thrown off the contractors' yoke two years ago had not a scandal-laden registration board throttled a municipal election by depriving thousands of citizens of their votes, either through intimidation or high-handed methods in misadministering the law. Nevertheless ultimate responsibility for municipal misrule falls heavily upon the citizens themselves for their lack of exercise of the fundamental duty of citizenship

—voting. For instance, to take the most recent figures, last spring the registration of voters in Philadelphia was only 241,090 out of 416,860 assessed voters—more than 175,000 citizens having failed to register. Allowing for fraud in the contractor-padded assessor lists, removals and all other disqualifications, it is safe to say that there were at least 100,000 citizens in the city who did not take the trouble to qualify for expressing their will at the polls.

THE CHARTER UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY PUBLIC OPINION

THE PEOPLE alone can remedy this condition. It is their government, their city, and theirs is the duty of its redemption. With a new charter drawn in accordance with public demand, in the form expressed by the citizens through their non-partisan charter committee, civic, business and trade organizations, church and fraternal societies, and approved with unanimous voice through newspapers and every organ of public opinion, there should be no doubt of the overwhelming verdict for municipal redemption at the polls.

And in my judgment there will be none. Most patriotic and greatest of all American cities in every fundamental strength and virtue that is real Americanism, Philadelphia will break the bands of contractor rule as easily as if they were ropes of sand. In being first among the cities of great size to give to the country an illustration and pattern of efficient administration, it will resume its rightful place in the van of American municipalities.

SWEEPING MUNICIPAL REFORMS

UPON the passage of the new Philadelphia charter law by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, the following summary of its provisions was issued by the Citizens' Charter Revision Committee, which framed the new law:

The charter revision bill as finally passed is an epoch-making piece of legislation. Despite the numerous minor amendments made during its course through the Legislature, the big reforms originally proposed remain substantially unchanged.

SMALL COUNCIL IN REPRESENTATIVE BASIS

THE MOST important single reform in the bill, and the one most bitterly opposed, is the creation of a small, single-chambered council on precisely the basis originally provided for in the Charter Committee bill. This council will be elected from the various State senatorial districts on the basis of one for each 20,000 assessed voters or major fraction thereof. The first council under this plan will consist of twenty-one members. Councilmen are to receive salaries of $5,000.00 each and are to be prohibited from holding any other office under the city, county, State or Federal Government.

CITY TO DO ITS OWN CONTRACT WORK

THE BILL provides that after December 31, 1920, the city shall do its own street cleaning and repairing and ashes, waste, rubbish and garbage collecting and disposing, unless the council, by a majority vote, with the approval of the Mayor, authorizes contracts to be let for such work. In case the council and the Mayor decide to let contracts for such work, they are authorized to make contracts for a longer period than one year, a restriction which has heretofore prevented competition.

BUSINESSLIKE BUDGET FOR CITY FINANCES

AS REGARDS municipal finances the bill effects important and far-reaching reforms. It provides that the Mayor shall submit to the council by October 15th a financial statement, showing the estimated receipts, fixed liabilities and proposed expenditures of the city for the ensuing year. The Council is required to consider

the Mayor's statement in open sessions and by December 15th to pass an ordinance setting forth the financial program for the ensuing year and at the same time to fix a tax rate that will produce sufficient funds, together with the funds from other sources, to pay all the fixed liabilities and the current expenditures set forth in the council's financial program for the ensuing year. The council is required to keep the expenditures of the city within the limits so fixed. Other provisions of the bill prohibit the city from borrowing money on long term bonds for current expenses, greatly reduce the mandamus evil and codify and greatly simplify the procedure for incurring indebtedness.

STRICT CIVIL SERVICE PROVISIONS

THE CIVIL service sections of the bill provide that three civil service commissioners shall be elected by a majority vote of the council, instead of being appointed by the Mayor as is done at present.

Political activity and payment of political contributions by policemen and firemen is made a misdemeanor punishable by fine and imprisonment. Moreover, any taxpayer may bring proceedings to have the employment of the offender declared illegal and to restrain payment of compensation to him.

(The present law forbidding the political activity of officeholders is reenacted.)

PROVISIONS FOR EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION

IN ADDITION to the foregoing reforms to be effected by the bill many important structural changes are brought about. A purchasing agent is provided in the department of the Mayor to take the place of the director of supplies. A city architect is also provided for in the Mayor's department and the city planning commission is given statutory authority.

The bill raises the bureau of health to a rank of a department. A department of public welfare is created to take over the activities of the bureau of charities, the bureau of correction and the board of recreation.

The city controller is given entire charge over all city accounts and employees engaged in keeping them.

The city solicitor is to be appointed by the Mayor, instead of being elective, as formerly.

PUBLIC SENTIMENT BACKS REFORMS

CHAIRMAN JOHN C. WINSTON, of the Citizens' Committee, which framed the new charter and reform laws for Philadelphia, gives credit to aroused public sentiment for the passage of the reform legislation. In a public statement issued upon the successful termination of the struggle in behalf of the bills in the Legislature he said:

"I do not hesitate to assert that the passage of the charter reform legislation is primarily due to organized public sentiment. The assistance of the administration, including the support of Senator Penrose and Governor Sproul (without whose aid all our efforts would have been in vain), was a commendable recognition of this overwhelming sentiment of the people, to which the public press gave expression. If this same public sentiment can now be organized for the purpose of electing councilmen who are free from allegiance to contractors and who will serve the public interest, then we shall get the full benefit of the new charter.

"It must not be overlooked that we have not only secured a small single chamber council, but for the first time in a generation this council is to be elected on a representative basis, the number of councilmen from each district being in proportion to the number of voters.

"The people can have the kind of government they choose to vote for, which before was not possible, owing to the grossly unequal ward representation in councils."

GREAT ADVANCE IN MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

CLINTON ROGERS WOODRUFF, for twenty-five years secretary of the National Municipal League, and recognized as one of the foremost authorities upon municipal legislation in the United States, views the new Philadelphia charter as a long step forward in city administration. In a public review of the new legislation, Mr. Woodruff summarizes it as follows:

"PHILADELPHIA, thanks to her new charter, is to have a new kind of city council; an effective civil service; a better fiscal policy and freedom to do its own work. A model of admirable draughtsmanship, this instrument, which became a law on the 25th day of June, contains 23,282 words, making it one of the most concise documents of its kind possessed by any American city.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL INSTEAD OF BI-CAMERAL BODY

"THE NEW Council will consist of 21 members in place of the great big, record-breaking, cumbersome, double body of 146 men elected from easily controlled pocket boroughs. This new body of 21, each of whom is to receive a living wage in the shape of an annual salary of $5,000, is to be elected every four years.

"The senatorial districts are the basis of representation. There are eight of these and they are as nearly homogeneous and compact as it is possible to make political subdivisions. We will have a South Philadelphia district, a West Philadelphia one, a Northeastern district, a Central district and so on through the list with similar needs and composition. There will be at least one councilman from each district and one additional councilman for each unit of 20,000 assessed voters.

"So as to keep the Council small, it contains an interesting provision that 'if at any time hereafter the women of the Commonwealth shall be given the right to vote, the unit of representation shall be 40,000 assessed voters instead of 20,000, so that the Council shall continue to be composed of twenty-one members.'

"As I have said so frequently while advocating this charter before the people of Philadelphia, such

a body constitutes a form of representative government which the voters themselves can handle with a minimum of political organization.

"This is the first great gain of the new charter: A real, wieldy, representative body.

POLITICAL CURSE OF DUAL OFFICE HOLDING ABOLISHED

"HAND in hand with this great gain is a provision doing away with dual office holding, which .for a generation has been the curse of Philadelphia politics. This is another gain which will mean much in the way of political freedom, for councilmen will no longer be compelled to serve two masters. Coupled with this is a modern civil service chapter introducing up-to-date methods of selecting public employees on a basis of merit administered by a commission elected by the Council of 21 instead of appointed by the Mayor, who is chief appointing power of the city.

"Political activity and payment of political contributions by policemen and firemen are made a misdemeanor punishable by fine and imprisonment and resulting in being debarred from office holding for two years. Moreover, any taxpayer may bring proceedings to have the employment of the offender declared illegal and to restrain payment of compensation to him, a tremendous lever for the effective enforcement of the law. The present law forbidding the political activity of office holders is re-enacted.

FAR-REACHING REFORM IN CITY BUDGET SYSTEM

"THESE provisions represent long steps forward, and while there are those who wanted all office holders placed in the same category, the most dangerous element—the police and the fire—are taken completely out of politics. This again represents the triumph of a generation's effort.

"The chapter on finance effects important and far-reaching reforms. It provides that the Mayor shall submit to the Council by October 15th a financial statement showing the estimated receipts, fixed liabilities and proposed expenditures of the city for the ensuing year. The Council is required to consider the Mayor's statement in open session and by December 15th to pass an ordinance setting forth the financial program for the ensuing year, and at the same time to fix a tax rate that will produce sufficient funds, together with the funds from other sources, to pay all the fixed

liabilities and the current expenditures set forth in the Council's financial program for the ensuing year. The Council is required to keep the expenditures of the city within the limits so fixed. Other provisions of the bill prohibiting the city from borrowing money on long-term bonds for current expenses, greatly reduce the mandamus evil and codify and greatly simplify the procedure for incurring indebtedness.

WILL FREE CITY FROM SHACKLES OF CONTRACTORS

"PERHAPS next in importance to the new Council of 21 is the striking off of the contract shackles, section 20 providing that 'the city shall do these things (repair and clean its streets and collect the ashes and waste, rubbish and garbage) directly, except in special cases when a majority of all the members elected to Council, with the approval of the Mayor, may authorize and direct.' This section goes into force and effect on January 1, 1921. It represents a long step forward in freeing the city from contractor rule, which has been a burden irksome to bear.

"Among other interesting features are the shortening of the ballot, by making the city's law officer (the city solicitor) an appointive, rather than an elective, one; the making of the Bureau of Health a department; the establishment of a Department of Public Welfare, and the creation of a purchasing agent in place of the present Department of Supplies.

"And now a word as to the influences to which the city owes this new instrument with which an alert electorate may achieve its political freedom. In the first place the Charter Committee. That body of representative citizens conceived and carried out its idea of a single measure which would be a codification of the present law with such changes as have been noted and many other of a less conspicuous character necessary for the easy running of the city's machinery. The Committee not only drafted the measure, but actively advocated it throughout the city and State and before the Legislature.

POTENT FACTORS IN PASSAGE OF REFORM LAWS

"A SECOND potent factor was Senator Boies Penrose, who brought the weight of his personal influence and of the State organization to bear at critical times. It is only fair to say that without his personal help the measure would have foundered on the rocks. There are

those who feel that his interest was primarily a political one—but such overlook the fact that he is a long-time student of city government and that he has long cherished a desire to give to his native city a charter worthy of the city's need and opportunity.

"So active has Senator Penrose been in recent years in Federal affairs and State politics that his fellow townsmen forget that his first contribution as a publicist was an account of the government of the city of Philadelphia, which he prepared in conjunction with his then partner (the late Edward P. Allinson) for the Johns Hopkins University series. This book, a model of concise and accurate statement, remains to this day as the most satisfactory statement of Philadelphia's government from the early days to the enactment of the Bullitt Bill. It is to be hoped that this interesting and important publication will be brought up to date so as to include this new charter, which bears the name of Senator Woodward, who introduced it into the Senate and was its sponsor through the Legislature.

FOUNDATION LAID FOR STILL GREATER ADVANCES

"THOSE who are in the confidence of Senator Penrose feel, I am told, that he is not through with his efforts to improve Philadelphia's governmental machinery and that he is studying other ways and means of giving Philadelphia the most modern and up-to-date form of government which can be devised. He feels, I believe, like many others who have given the situation their serious consideration, that the present charter, while it represents a long step forward, is only a step forward and by no means the last word.

"The Mayor is still too powerful as an appointing officer and it is out of keeping with modern efficiency methods to make the chief executive of a great corporation subject to the winds and whimsies of politics. When public sentiment is ready for the next step (and we must not overlook the fact that sound public sentiment is leisurely in its development), it will be in the direction of a chief administrator chosen by the Council. On several occasions the senior Senator has spoken along these lines and it is to be hoped that he will be sufficiently free of other obligations in the near future to give the weight

of his personal influence to the active advocacy of these views.

"Governor William C. Sproul was another potent factor in the situation. From the charter dinner last December down to the signing of the bill, he took a leading part and it was due to his interest, activity and forcefulness that Philadelphia has a charter that may properly and conservatively be regarded as a most substantial contribution to the better government of the third American city."

REFORM LAWS TO SAFEGUARD POPULAR WILL

A GROUP of laws passed by the Pennsylvania Legislature in conjunction with the new Philadelphia charter is characterized as being a close second in importance to the charter itself. These laws were framed by the citizens' committee to give full and effective expression to popular will at the polls and make the new charter effective.

In general, they reform the personal registration and election laws by breaking down the barriers which the contractors' machines in Philadelphia erected to prevent fair elections and perpetuate its grasp upon the city government.

George W. Coles, Chairman of the Town Meeting Committee and the independent municipal Town Meeting party arrayed against the contractor machine, declared in a public statement that the passage of the reform laws will emancipate Philadelphia. He said:

"Three reform bills passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, and signed by Governor Sproul, are of vital importance in connection with the new charter for Philadelphia. The new laws are:

"1. An amended Personal Registration Act.

"2. An amended Uniform Primary Act.

"3. An Act to safeguard 'the intention of the voter' in marking his ballot.

"Persons unfamiliar with Philadelphia's political conditions, and the maladministration of the heretofore existing election laws by the official agents of the contractors' machine, can have no adequate conception of the arbitrary powers exercised over elections by the contractors. Through absolute control of the legal machinery governing the registration of voters, and primary and general elections, they have upon repeated occasions been powerful enough to defy and thwart the public will.

COMPELS PARTY LEADERSHIP TO RESPOND TO POPULAR WILL

"THE BASIS of municipal control in Philadelphia has been compact organization in politics. The purpose of the new reform laws is to overcome the barriers of 'organization,' and compel party

leadership to be responsible to popular will. By means of political organization, buttressed by fraud as well as elaborate office-holding machinery, the contractors have retained themselves in control. The new laws are designed to give public opinion a fair chance to express itself, and to make political organizations amenable to the demands of the people.

"In a sentence, the reform laws dig away the very foundations of selfish and sordid political 'organization,' and place the power and responsibility for municipal rule directly upon the voters.

"Without such enactments by the Legislature, the adoption of a new charter for Philadelphia would have been quite in vain. Unless the voters of the city had been given opportunity for full and fair expression at the polls, it would have been futile to attempt to remedy municipal conditions by mere statute, no matter how advanced and progressive.

"The amended Personal Registration Law will make registration of voters as easy and simple as possible, at the same time surrounding the registry lists with every safeguard against fraud. Under the old law, as administered by a board of four members controlled by the contractors' machine, voters were intimidated or denied their rights.

"The registration board refused citizens the right of access to the registry lists, but regularly turned them over to be copied for political uses by the contractors' machine.

"The board threw off the lists the names of thousands of qualified voters who had no appeal except to the courts. Then the board defied the courts and exercised the whole power of their office to prevent fair and honest registrations.

"The whole machinery of registration, including the thousands of division or precinct registrars, has been political, factional and oppressive. A detailed review of the maladministration of the law by this board would be a narrative of thwarting, controverting and defeating the whole intent of the personal registration of voters.

PROVIDES FOR INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED FRAUD

"AMONG other provisions, the new law legislates the old board out of office and provides a new board of five appointed by the Governor in accordance with the non-partisan spirit of the

Personal Registration Act. This board is required to sit at definite periods and adopt other regulations to protect the right of citizens to be registered. The board is empowered, as was done in the case of the registration commissioners in New York, to make investigations of attempted or alleged fraud, and to safeguard the registry lists from corruption or political manipulation.

"Furthermore, the method of selecting division registrars is reformed by giving the opportunity for citizens in every division to name non-partisan registrars, instead of leaving their appointment to political dictation, as heretofore. In every respect in which the old law has proven deficient or oppressive it has been remedied, and the new act has been pronounced by election law authorities as one of the best personal registration acts in the United States.

"For six years Pennsylvania has had a uniform primary law on the statute books, and in general its operation has been a marked advance over the old convention system. However, like every other election agency under control of the contractors' machine in Philadelphia, it was converted into an instrument to defeat the public will whenever possible.

"Particularly was the law flouted in the absence of proper safeguards and penalties. The law was vague and indefinite in many respects in prescribing the manner for conducting primary elections and in counting the vote.

"The amended law makes the statute governing primary elections definite and explicit, provides adequate penalties for attempted frauds, and assures greater publicity and fairness in the counting of votes. Many ballot tricks and frauds at the primaries heretofore practiced by the contractors' machine will be rendered either impossible or difficult, and obstructions to fair expression of the will of the voters will be swept away.

"Lastly, but not of minor importance, is the 'intention of the voter' law. In brief, it provides that when a voter marks a square in a party column, and then marks a square after the name of one or more candidates in another column, his ballot shall be counted according to his clear intention—for the candidates marked singly and for all the remainder in the party column he designates.

"To voters outside of Philadelphia or Pennsylvania this might appear a small, or rather an obvious, matter. But it is necessary to explain

that, under decisions of the State Supreme Court, and under conflicting practices by election boards and official computing boards, this is a subject of great importance in elections in this city and State.

THWARTS SURREPTITIOUS MARKING OF BALLOTS

"THOUSANDS of ballots have been thrown out as invalid at elections because voters have attempted to vote for individual candidates after marking party squares. Furthermore, it has been a favorite trick of machine election officers to 'invalidate' ballots cast by independents by surreptitiously marking them during the count. In machine-controlled divisions and wards this fraudulent device has upon occasion been used to the extent of disfranchising independent voters.

"New York, and possibly other States, have 'intent of voter' laws. It is so obviously a fair proposition to give a voter the benefit of his honest intention in marking a ballot that it needs no argument. Supplemented by the fact that in Philadelphia the old unfair method gave the contractors' machine one of its easiest opportunities for fraud in elections, the necessity for such a law becomes apparent.

"Important as were these bills in the Legislature, it is doubtful if they could ever have been passed without the active intervention of Senator Penrose and the support of Governor Sproul. To them the independents of Philadelphia, and all citizens of the State who favor free and fair elections, owe the credit for these important reform measures.

"When the bills were drafted by the independent forces opposed to contractor rule in Philadelphia, the support of Senator Penrose was solicited, and was at once promised. The Senator made good his pledge to the people by going to Harrisburg and making possible the passage of the bills through his personal interest and influence. Against every obstruction raised by the contractor machine and its allies, and against their sneers and opposition to these measures as 'reform' bills, he fought successfully to their passage.

"Governor Sproul's personal intervention in behalf of these measures, and his prompt signing of the bills, are indications of the degree of importance which he attached to them.

"With these essential laws to give the people free expression at the polls and restore popular government in Philadelphia, there will be no doubt of the success of the city's new municipal charter."